A REPRESENTATION Of the STATE of the *PROTESTANT CHURCHES* IN EUROPE:

Tending to awaken the Spirits of those only who will lay to heart the Afflictions of *Joseph*.

THE State of the Protestant Churches is a Concernment which we are all bound to lay deeply to heart at this time, having been engaged many years ago to procure their Peace and Welfare: for if all things be duly considered, we shall perceive that the enemies of the Churches had never so great an advantage against them as now they have: whether we look upon them

singly by themselves in all the parts of *Europe*; or consider the Actings of their common Enemies in the Progress which they do make in their design to ruine them; or lastly if we look upon them jointly as they stand in relation one to another.

In the first respect if we cast our eye upon *Poland*, *Bohemiah*, *Moravia*, *Austria* and *Silesia*, where not long ago were many flourishing and large Churches, we shall see that they are all wholly dissipated and wasted.

In *Transylvania* and *Hungaria* there are some yet remaining, but they are in so low and uncertain a condition, that upon the least advantage of power which the house of *Austria* may get, they may in all humane appearance be ruined in like manner.

In *Germany* the Churches are so divided, and the Protestant States so distracted, that they do not only not concurre in any common way of mutual Edification for their mutual preservation, but as the *Lutheran* party by their contentious Ministry hath set it self to destroy the rest; So God doth suffer their chief Protectors the Kings of *Sueden* and *Denmark* to make it their chief work to destroy each other. And the Electors of *Saxony* and *Brandenburg* without respect to the safety of their Churches, serve the *Austrian* Design against the Protestant Interest; nor is there any considerable Prince in *Germany* (set aside the *Landgrave* of *Hessen*) who is able to do any thing of moment to maintain that Interest.

In the low Countries it doth not appear that they have any respect to the Protestant Interest, but their present Actings tend rather to serve the common enemies design against it, then for it.

In *France* the Protestant Churches are deprived of their

their former Priviledges, for they are so many ways, and in so many places infringed, that they cannot reckon upon them, or make any account of them any more; so that their present standing is a meer Toleration at pleasure,

In *Switzerland* the Pope and the *Austrians* have stirred up, and hired the Popish *Cantons* to break with the Protestants their fundamental League, upon the account of Religion, by persecuting to death or banishment all such as leave their Superstition to become Proselytes to us.

In the Vallies of *Piemont* the Duke of *Savoy* since the Massacre of those Protestants, though Peace was made with them, yet he doth still most cruelly, though not openly oppress and vex them, by giving them up to the power of the Inquisition, which will in the end (if God doth not otherwise provide) destroy them utterly.

As for our selves in *England*, our distracted and unsetled condition is such, and so well known, that it is in vain to speak much of it by way of complaint, when we see no way of Redress as yet opened.

This is the State of the Churches, if singly considered by themselves, wherein their decaying and almost dying state, maybe read in great Characters of blood, and of confusion in which they lie wallowing.

But if in the second consideration their state be reflected upon, as opposed by their common enemies, who have so great and so many advantages to destroy them, it is manifest (except God work some miracle for them) that they cannot possibly escape utter ruine and desolation.

For their adversaries the Papists formerly disunited, are now all united in one design. Their civil differences being now composed, their head, the Pope doth carry on and manage their common interest against Protestants with much subtilty and vigour, not secretly, but openly by innumerable Agents and Emissaries, who are subordinate unto the Congregation *De propaganda fide*. These do prosecute his Counsels with indefatigable Industry, with great expence, and with all the advantage of publick Authority that can be given by him and his Adherents, to countenance and support them. And because it is not unknown, how these Emissaries creep into all Protestant States and Professions, to observe the distances and divisions which they find amongst them to widen and foment them in the minds of the common sort, and cunningly to cast stumbling blocks before all the rest, and thereupon to insinuate with plausibility their own superstitions, therefore we shall not need to insist upon this.

The thing that is now most observable is, that in *France*, where there was never any Inquisition formerly admitted, it is now lately introduced, upon some former preparatives made long ago; for the Cardinal *Richelieu* in his time did first prohibit all Forreigners from bearing any publick Office in the *French* Churches and Schools. Then afterward he did by another Inhibition cut off all the correspondency which formerly was between the Churches of *France*, and the other Protestants of *Europe*: And now in this juncture of Affairs this Cardinal hath brought in the Congregation *De Propaganda fide* (which is an Inquisition under another name) and it doth begin to act with publick Authority prohibiting all Commerce from abroad

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for the vent of Divinity Books; So that they ſuffer not the Bibles which are brought from *Genevah* to be ſold any more, but do confiſcate them; and no doubt they will proceed to ſuppreſs the printing of them alſo within their own Dominions; and it is apparent that in every City in *France*, where there is a Church of Proteſtants, there is alſo a certain number of Emiſſaries belonging to the Congregation *De propaganda fide*, ſetled to oppoſe them and vex them; ſo that it is as manifeſt as the Sun at noon day, that this deſign is univerſally to be proſecuted againſt all the Churches, both in *France* and elſewhere; as ſoon as they ſhall ſee the Proteſtant States ſufficiently weakned by diviſions.

If then in the laſt place we ſhould contemplate the Proteſtant Churches and States jointly as they ſtand in Relation one to another, to ſee in what poſture we find them, to oppoſe this combination of their enemies ſo ſtrongly and univerſally laid; although we hope that at laſt *Babylon* ſhall fall, and that God will diſapoint all their plots; yet it is heavily to be lamented, that whiles our common and known adverſaries are ſo manifeſtly diligent and active to quench the light of the Goſpel, and to diſturb all the *Proteſtant* States and Churches which hold it forth to the world; by which means Atheiſm, *Profaneſs* and Superſtition are not only upheld, but propagated in the world abundantly, and brake in amongſt us; I ſay whiles the Inſtruments of Satan are ſo buſie to advance his Kingdome, it is heavily to be lamented, that we who pretend to advance the Kingdom of Chriſt, and by ſolemn Vows and Promiſes to God, and before all the world, are bound to it, are ſo careleſs of the intereſt

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of Christ, that it seems it is made a doubt amongst some of us, *Whether it be lawfull for a Christian Magistrate to have any respect in his place to the profession of Christianity more then to Heathenism, Mahumetanism or Judaism?* and whiles this is made a doubt, all the thoughts of Religion being laid aside as a publick Concernment; on the one hand all Licentiousness, Prophaneſs, Blasphemy and wickedness breake forth, and bring all manner of reproach upon the Profession of Christanity it self; And on the other hand, the divided Professors of Christanity in their severall parties, seeke and follow eagerly their particular advantages of power and places to be able to undermine the settlement of each other: Which tends not only to the obstructing of all common Gospel interests, but to the utter subversion of all that seemes as yet to have any bottom to stand upon, either in Church or State amongst us.

It is clear that the Papists have Agents everywhere, and that they have an universall correspondency, to keep us in division within our selves, and at a distance from all our neighbour Protestants, which is the main of their designe against us, whereby they hope not onely to weaken us, but to ruine us. And we are so far from having any Correspondency or Agency either civil or religious, either amongst our selves to keep up the remainder of our union at whome, or towards others to influence our affections abroad to other Protestants, or to receive theirs, for mutual comfort and Spiritual communion; that we are rather bent to quitte all such relations, and to breake with them, for ought as yet appeares; And our thoughts are so much estranged from having any designe set a foot to this effect, that hitherto it hath not beene possible to obtain either open countenance or secret assistance for

for one ſingle Agent, who would make it his work, either at home or abroad to prepare a way for ſuch an enterpriſe; that is, to procure acquaintance with the beſt affected, and to find out ſuch as are ſober minded and peaceable to move them and engage them to lay the common Goſpel intereſt to heart jointly with ſome of us, at leaſt ſo far as to be able to oblige them to pray for us, or our ſelves to pray for them in Caſes of extremity when humane help doth fail, and deliverance can be expected only from the mighty hand of God immediately. Which certainly is ſuch a defect of Chriſtian Charity both to our ſelves and to them; and ſuch a neglect of the Intereſt of Chriſts Kingdome, and ſo much contrary to our acknowledged, profeſſed and more then once publickely Proteſted duty, that it is juſt with God thus to daſh us in pieces one againſt another, as veſſells in which he takes no pleaſure, and which are altogether unfit for his ſervice: except we ſpeedily repent, and mind henceforth ſeriouſly and ſincerely the true common intereſt of the Goſpel, and the main Concernment of our Profeſſion; Which the Lord grant we may at laſt lay to heart for his names ſake, and the advancement of his glory in our own preſervation.

Amen.

FINIS.

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